

Occupational Enterprises, Inc. and Virginia One Care

The Problem

Occupational Enterprises, Inc. ("OEI") is a nonprofit organization that oversees a group of inter-connected programs supported by both public and private funding that seeks to provide education, training, retraining and counseling to those seeking employment in Southwest Virginia. Lee County Sherriff Gary Parsons informed Purdue that OEI was in need of funding for its critical work in eight counties in Southwest Virginia.

The Response

Over a three-year period beginning in 2001, Howard Udell worked with OEI Executive Director Aleta Spicer to provide funding for OEI programs in the area of drug use prevention, education, recovery and employment services. The services provided included counseling, job readiness, sheltered employment and mentoring. Over a three-year period, Purdue provided a total of \$450,000 in funding to OEI.

Based on a recommendation by Aleta Spicer, Purdue provided a further grant of \$100,000 to the "One Care" program designed to bring health care to the more than 150,000 citizens of Southwest Virginia who had no health insurance or were underinsured. One Care sought to provide residents of Southwest Virginia with a web-based referral system that would create a link between public and private social services agencies and eliminate the need for multiple applications for various types of care.

The Result

With the benefit of Purdue's funding, many critical programs supported OEI, including One Care, were able to be expanded and reach a greater number of local residents in need. The Neighborhood Network is one example. It serves the elderly, welfare mothers, the disabled and children ages five to fifteen. With the support afforded by Purdue, the Neighborhood Network was able to extend its reach and provide on-site services, such as health monitoring, computer keyboarding, job development, tutoring and GED programs to many additional individuals in need. Purdue also enabled OEI to provide critical services through various other programs and thereby reach underserved populations in eight counties in Southwest Virginia. Programs that were supported provided many services including counseling, sheltered workshops, mentoring, public housing anti-drug campaigns and drug prevention camp.